

660 North Street, Suite 300 Jackson, Mississippi 39202 Phone: 601-359-1386 Fax: 601-359-1349 www.mfc.state.ms.us



March 2012

MEC News

Caring for the Trees and Forests of Mississippi Since 1926

The Forest

Only a man in the forest green,
Only a match that was dropped, unseen;
Only some duff, some leaves and wood -Now desolation where forests stood.

No more grass, nor flowers, nor trees,
Nor singing birds, nor humming bees,
Nor cottontail, nor timid deer,
Nor cooing dove, nor hooting owl,
Nor chattring squirrel, nor smiling coon,
Nor dewy morn, nor shady noon,
Nor cooling dell, nor mossy log,
Nor rippling rill, no flowring bog.
Gone, all gone, to come no more
With pleasures and with plenteous tore.

Only a man in the forest green,
Only a match that was dropped, unseen;
Only some duff, some leaves and wood -Now desolation where forests stood.

~G. A. Bolden, in West Virginia Wild Life, July-August 1927; from "First Steps in Southern Forest Study"; published in 1930.

MFC News is published by the Mississippi Forestry Commission.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider



- The capital of Mississippi was named after Andrew Jackson, the seventh U.S. presi-
- The 4-H Club, the youth organization devoted to hands-on learning, was founded in Holmes County in 1907. The four "H's" refer to head, heart, hands and health.
- Dr. Emmette F. Izard of Hazlehurst developed the first fibers of rayon. They became known as the first real synthetics.
- At Vicksburg, the United States Army Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station is the world's largest hydraulic research laboratory.

Newsletter Deadlines

All submissions are welcome. Photographs are encouraged (although space limitations may curtail inclusion). Items must be received by the *IDth of the month* to be included in the next month's issue. E-mail submissions (in Microsoft Word) and photos

lharris@mfc.state.ms.us

or mail to: Lisa A. Harris Mississippi Forestry Commission 660 North Street, Suite 300 Jackson, MS 39202

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WILDFIRE NUMBERS & FACTS

- The MFC suppressed 4,142 wildfires in fiscal year 2011 with 518occurring in the month of March.
- In fiscal year 2011, 54,535 acres burned in Mississippi with 10,353 burning in the month of March.
- In fiscal year 2011, 98.7% of all wildfire were caused by humans. Of these, roughly 82.54% were escapes from debris burning or arson. (Incendiary = 41.19%, debris burning = 41.36%
- For fiscal years 2007 to 2011, 30.49% of all wildfires suppressed by the MFC occurred in the month of March.
- For fiscal years 2007 to 2011, 35.93% of all acres burned in Mississippi occurred in the month of March.
- For fiscal years 2007 to 2011, 98.99% of all wildfires were causes by humans. Of these, roughly 84.69% were caused by debris burning or arson. (Incendiary = 43.97%, debris burn-

ing = 40.72%)

- For fiscal year 2002 to 2011, 99.34% of all wildfires were causes by humans. Of these, roughly 86.45% percent were caused by debris burning or arson. (Incendiary = 46.99%, debris burning = 39.46%)
- Top ten counties for wildfires are:
 - Pearl River (234)
 - 2. Harrison (191)
 - 3. Jeff Davis (183)
 - 4. Hancock (159)
 - 5. Lamar (157)
 - 6. Jackson (154)
 - 7. Marion (152)
 - 8. Leake (135)
 - 9. Holmes (134)
 - 10. Wayne (110)
- Top ten counties for acres burned:
 - 1. Harrison (4,829)
 - 2. Pearl River (4,455)
 - 3. Hancock (3,554)
 - 4. Jackson (3,508)
 - 5. Lamar (1,791)
 - 6. Walthall (1,753)
 - 7. Amite (1,736)
 - 8. Tishomingo (1,551)
 - 9. Holmes (1,477)

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10. Lincoln (1,405)

76 out of 82 counties reported fires in fiscal year 2011

For more numbers and facts, visit out website and check out the forestry facts and wildfire data page (www.mfc.ms.gov/ facts-n-data.php)

This data reflects wildfires suppressed by the Mississippi Forestry Commission. This data does not include any wildfires responded to by volunteer fire departments. Source: MFC Daily Fire Report.

ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES.





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MARCH IS WILDFIRE PREVENTION MONTH

ry Commission announces, by proclamation signed by Governor Barbour, that March is wildfire prevention month in Mississippi.

"Historically, more wildfires occur in March than any other month in Mississippi," said Charlie Morgan, state forester of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. "This is due to the combination of dry leaves, grass and other vegetation; strong, gusty winds; and the increased level of outdoor activity as many property owners begin clean-up projects on their farms and woodlands."

During the month of March, the forestry commission is conducting a wildfire prevention campaign designed to raise the public's awareness to the threat of wildfire and to prevent wildfires caused by carelessness. Carelessness with debris burning is a leading cause of wildfire in Mississippi. Officials with the commission point out that wildfires burn more than trees. Houses, out buildings, farm and outdoor recreational equipment, vehicles and even lives are sometimes lost.

On average, 25 per-

The Mississippi Forest-cent of the wildfires and 42 percent of the acres burned occur in the month of March. The average size of a March wildfire is 26 acres. (For reference, one acre is



about the size of a football field.) The average annual wildfire activity in Mississippi is 3,256 wildfires that burn 55,820 acres.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission urges the public, especially rural property owners, to not burn outdoor debris on windy days. Check with local officials for burn ban information. The commission lists counties with active bans against open outdoor burning on its Web site at www.mfc.ms.gov.

The forestry commission encourages residents to protect their home from the

destructive forces of wildfire. Homeowners can become "firewise" by following these fire safety tips:

- Clear flammable vegetation up to 30 feet away from your house.
- Eliminate "ladder" fuels by mowing tall grass, trimming shrubs, and pruning lower tree branches. Ladder fuels allow a ground fire to climb up.
- Keep the lawn watered and mowed short (3 inches or less) on all sides of all build-
- Clean the roof, gutters and windowsills of leaves, needles and other debris.

For more information on our spring wildfire prevention campaign, visit our website at http:// www.mfc.ms.gov/wildfire



March's Birthdays



Mark Sprague -1 Charles Clolinger -2 Brendon Blakely -4 John Dean -4 Glen Cooper -5 Thomas Nichols -5 Marilyn Davis -7 Andy Redwood -8 James Gann - 11 Victor Long -12 Trenton Beatty - 13 Gregory Rolison -14 William Warner -14 Gregory Hall -15 Douglas Warren - 15 Bryant Brown -16 Janet Matthews -16 Little Collums - 17 Charles Jefferson - 17 John Rhodes - 17 Marvin Mathis -19 James Pugh -20 Michael Butler -21 Larry Reed -21 Sandra Snell -21 Jack White -21 Vernon Faust -22 James Wood -22 Mike Zeiderman -23 Vickie Frasier -25 Jeffrey Crowder -26 Robert Stewart -26 Jacob Hamilton -27 Jamie Marroy -27 Stacy Lewis -28 Matthew Steed -29 Shields Matthews -30 Richie Atkinson -31 Jack Howard -31



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- Christopher Sachs, Forest Ranger, Perry County, Southeast District
- James Black, Forest Ranger, Harrison County, Southeast District
- Victor Long, Forest
 Ranger, Newton County, South Central District
- Cecil Brewer, Forest
 Ranger, Perry County,
 Southeast District
- Waylon Lindsay, Forest Ranger, Pearl River County, Southeast District
- Christine McQueen,
 Emergency Telecommunicator, Southeast
 District
- * Judy Morgan, Emergency Telecommunicator, Southeast District
- * Tammy Spitchley, Emergency Telecommunicator, South Central District
- Donald Scarborough,
 Forest Ranger, Pearl
 River County, Southeast District
- Stephen Ladner, Forest Ranger, Pearl River County, Southeast District
- William Cook, Forest
 Ranger, Marshall County, Northeast District



TREE CITY USA AWARD AND ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION IN LUCEDALE, MS



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TOYOTA ARBOR DAY EVENTS LAFAYETTE & UNION COUNTIES



County Superintendent of Education Ken Basil by SF Hicks.



Right: Toyota seedling presented to New Albany Agro-Science teacher Burke Anderson by SF Hicks.



Left: Toyota seedlings presented to Lafayette Superintendent of Education Adam Pugh by SF Hicks.





George M. Butler, retired District Forester (NED) passed away on Friday, February 10, 2012. Please keep his family in your prayers and thoughts as they are coping with this lost.





Gone Fishin'

Kenna Herandez, Admin Assistant, District Office, Northeast District



Right: Mississippi Forestry Commission Outreach Forester Bill Kitchings traveled to several CFA leadership workshops to inform CFA about MFC programs for 2012.

Nomination Being Accepting

The MFA Timber harvesting Committee is currently nominations for the 2012 MFA Logger of the Year! The deadline to submit Logger of Year nominations forms to John Auel is April 25, 2012. "County Forestry Associations are especially encouraged to submit nominations for loggers in their area," said Barry Burney, Chairman of the **MFA Timber Harvesting** Committee.

Keep Forester Around by Signing Letter

The American Tree Farm System, in partnership with the National Association of State Foresters, is working to keep forester around by supporting the U.S. Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program - which might not be around in the future, as President Obama's budget proposes to reduce the program by almost 14 percent. Say Thank You to your forester today by signing this letter in support of the Forest Stewardship Program.

WELLNESS BENEFITS FOR ALL STATE EMPLOYEES - UPDATE

As a reminder, participants are no longer required to complete a Health Quotient (HQ) health risk assessment each year in order to receive wellness/preventive benefits. Please click on this link "Wellness/Preventive Coverage" for more information on these benefits. By following the above link, you will be directed to the Wellness/Preventive Coverage website. This webpage will give you options for determining what is covered under your adult wellness services for 2012. The Plan provides first-dollar coverage for certain adult wellness/preventive services. Participants residing inside the State of Mississippi must use an AHS State Network Provider. Benefits are provided at 100% of the allowable charge for up to two annual wellness/preventive office visits and certain diagnostic tests. If you have questions about this coverage, please contact Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi at 800-709-7881.

Please do not send wellness check up to SABC for unreimbursed medical claims, as in most cases, they are covered by the State of Mississippi health plan. According to the Department of Finance and Administration, up to two annual wellness/preventive office visit are covered at 100%. In addition, the plan will cover certain age appropriate diagnostic tests. (These include; Glucose, Stool, HIV, STD, Urinalysis, Mammogram and Colonoscopy to name a few). Therefore, wellness check ups or wellness office visits must be filed through insurance before we can determine any out of pocket cost. An Explanation of Benefits from Blue Cross Blue Shield will be required when requesting reimbursement from your Unreimbursed Medical Spending Account.

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PERS)

The Public Employee's Retirement System of Mississippi Member Handbook is available for downloading from their website at www.pers.state.ms.us. The Handbook provides members with a comprehensive source of information on the Retirement System and it benefits. Click on "Members Services," and then "Member Handbook", then on Public Employees' Retirement System Member Handbook (revised 09/13/11).



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MISSISSIPPI DEFERRED COMPENSATION (MDC)

Mississippi Deferred Compensation (MDC) is available to any employee, elected official, or independent contractor of the state of Mississippi or its political subdivisions. MDC is a supplemental retirement savings plan, also classified as a defined contribution plan, regulated under §457 of the Internal Revenue Code. With this plan, not only are earnings tax deferred until withdrawal, current income taxes are reduced because compensation is partially deferred. No federal income taxes are due on the deferred amount until withdrawal, which usually occurs at retirement when the participant may be in a lower tax bracket.

A participant may defer as little as \$25 per month with a monthly maintenance fee of \$2.25. The participant is eligible to receive payment(s) from the plan at termination of employment, retirement, death, or unforeseen emergency, or contributions may be rolled over to the System for purchase of eligible service credit. By June 30, 2011, total investments were \$1.3 billion. During the fiscal year, more than \$87.4 million was contributed to the plan by 40,125 participants.

The PERS Board of Trustees has selected a variety of investment options from which a participant may choose.

The MDC office is located at 4450 Old Canton Road, Suite 107, Jackson, MS 39211. The office is open each business day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants may call the office at 800-846-4551 or 601-364-9350. MDC participants may check balances and execute certain transactions 24 hours a day online at www.mdcplan.com or by calling 800-892- 4352. Both online and telephone account access are password protected.



Moving On

- * Berry Thomas, Forestry Technician, Statewide
- Jason Shelby, Forest Ranger, Lauderdale County, South Central District
- Ryan Boyette, Forestry Technician, Attala County, East Central District



MFC Training Schedule for April 2012

Courses	Location	Dates & Times
Safety in the Workplace	Capital District	April 2nd; 8:15 a.m Noon
	South Central District	April 10th & 11th; 8:15 a.m Noon
First Aid and CPR	Southwest District	April 13th, 20th and 30th, 8:00 a.m 3:00 p.m.
S-233 Tractor & Plow Boss	Capital District	April 12th & 13th; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
	Southeast District	April 18th & 19th; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Basic Fire Courses Practical Final - New Employees	Roosevelt State Park,	April 4th & 5th; 9:00 a.m 5:00 p.m.
	Legion State Park	April 9th & 10th; 9:00 a.m 5:00 p.m.
Prescribed Burning Shortcourse	MS State University	April 24th - 26th

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FORESTRY WORKSHOP HELPS SCOUTS GET BADGES

By Susan Collins-Smith MSU Ag Communications

HAZELHURST – More than 200 Boy Scouts in the Andrew Jackson Council met at Hood Boy Scout Camp in Hazlehurst Feb. 11 for a workshop to help them earn their forestry merit badge. Phillip Talley helped to plant one-third an acre of pine seedlings during the Feb. 11, 2012, workshop held at Hood Boy Scout Camp in Hazlehurst to help members of the Andrew Jackson Council earn their forestry merit badges.

Instructors from the Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi Forestry Commission, Mississippi Forestry Association and Weyerhaeuser Company taught the scouts about forestry resources, stewardship and the forestry profession.

"Mississippi is two-thirds forest, so this training is perfect for our Boy Scouts," said Stephen Dicke, Extension forestry specialist. "These troops spend a lot of their time in the forest. It is important that they understand how the forest behaves and how to adjust the way they camp to fit the behavior of the forest."

Workshop sessions included information on the differences in wildfires and prescribed burns, tree identification, forest pests, forest regeneration, forestry products, and the job and tools of a forester.

"The forestry training in particular gives these boys an opportunity to see a profession in action and learn about the forests of Mississippi and the contributions the forest makes to their lives," Dicke said. "It is through Boy Scouts that I got interested in forestry as a career. We spent a lot of time out in the woods, and I started to wonder

if I could get a job doing that."

Roderick Jones, an eighth-grade scout who attended the workshop, said he might be interested in pursuing forest- Dicke said trees and boys are both ry as a career.

"All the sessions were really good, and I learned more than I thought I would," Jones said. "I think being a forester would be fun."

But Boy Scouting is about more than learning subjects such as forestry and first aid.

"After my family moved to Jackson, I found out I had cancer," said Chris Gueydan, a scout parent and troop leader from Raymond. "I wanted my boys to be in scouts because I wanted them to have the positive male leadership that being in Boy Scouts provides if something were to happen to me. Boy Scouts instills confidence, perseverance and self-reliance. Merit badges also expose kids to all kinds of career paths."

Scouting also builds future lead-

"Workshops like this give the boys the opportunity to learn from people who do this every day," said Steve Zachow, troop leader. "It gives them a first-hand look at what it means to be a forester. While teaching them about forestry and other careers, scouting also provides them a chance to be around men who set good examples.

"Scouting provides the opportunity for these kids to take on responsibility. Although adults provide guidance, we let the kids manage as much as possible," he said. "They use those

skills the rest of their lives. It's incredible to see them mature and become leaders."

worth the investment.

"A managed forest is worth a lot when it's mature," Dicke said. "When you spend time cultivating and nourishing your forest in the early stages, you've got something really valuable in about 20 years. Trees and boys are very similar in that sense."

Released: Feb. 16, 2012 Contact: Stephen Dicke, (601) 857-2284



Phillip Talley helped to plant one-third an acre of pine seedlings during the Feb. 11, 2012, workshop held at Hood Boy Scout Camp in Hazlehurst to help members of the Andrew Jackson Council earn their forestry merit badges. (Photo by Susan Collins-Smith)

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FORESTRY WORKSHOP HELPS SCOUTS GET BADGES

The MFC provided a plethora of free material including a compass-carabineer for each Boy Scout, Firewise handbooks, pencils, and Tree Identification manuals for Scout Leaders. We also enabled the tree planting exercise by loaning 25 dibble bars!

MFC participants/contributors:

- -Ted Ratcliff, Service Forester Franklin & Jefferson-Instructor, Forest Management
- -Miles Henderson, Service Forester -Copiah-Facilitator, Tree Planting Exercise
- -Bill Kitchings-Outreach Forester Central Region-Provider, MFC Promotional Items, Educational Material
- -Opie Blackwell-Firewise Coordinator- Provider, Educational Material
- -Jim Hancock, Grant Coordination Forester-State Office-Instructor, Forest Fire/Prescribed Burning



ANOTHER THANK YOU!!!



February 15, 2012

Mr. Jim Hancock Mississippi Forestry Commission Grant Coordination/Longleaf Restoration 660 North Street, Suite 300 Jackson, MS 39202

Mr. Hancock,

Thank you for your assistance in conducting an outstanding Forestry Day program last Saturday at Hood Scout Reservation for the Scouts, Webelos, and Leaders of the Andrew Jackson Council.

Many compliments have been received from our volunteer leaders about what an awesome event that it was and they strongly expressed that they hope this is an annual event.

It was evident to them that your instruction was professional and that the Scouts and they benefited from the knowledge and experience that you provided.

Everything went according to plan and schedule and although the weather was brisk and cold; the goals of providing a new outdoor experience, a fun and educational event, an opportunity to earn badges, and an opportunity to spend a meaningful day and/or weekend in the woods was accomplished.

We appreciate your dedication and support to Scouting and look forward to working with you in the future.

Yours in Scouting,

James K. Bell

Council, Activities Chairman

Mike Tischer

Council Staff Adviser

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Prepared. For Life.™



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My leaves are simple, alternate and evergreen. They range in size from 0.5" to 1.5" long and are 0.25" to 0.5" wide. Their margin is crenate, their apex obtuse and their base inequilateral. They are elliptic to elliptic-oblong in sharp and dark green above and paler green below. Their surface is shiny above and opaque below.

My twigs are slender and stiff. They are initially purplish brown turning to light gray. Their surface is velvety, becoming glabrous.

My buds are minute in size, obtuse in shape, dark brown to nearly black in color with a glabrous surface.

My fruit is berrylike with a few ribbed. They are approximately 0.25" in size, spheroidal in shape and bright red in color.

My flowers are dioecious on slender club-shaped glabrous pedicels in short glabrous cymes. They are either solitary or in pairs with four white petals.

My bark is reddish brown and thin.

I have multiple stem and reach 25 feet in height at mature. I have a slow growth rate and reach 20 feet maximum at twenty year of age. I have a long life span of 100 years or more.

TREE KNOWLEDGE - WHO AM I?

I have a high tolerance to drought, low tolerance to fire and intermediate tolerance to shade. I have no tolerance to anaerobic conditions.

I prefer coastal dunes and forests; occasionally I am found in sand hills and upper edges of brackish and salt marshes, sandy hammocks coastal sand dunes, inner-dune depressions, maritime forest, nontidal forested wetlands, well-drained forests and pine flatwoods.

I enjoy a soil pH of 4.5 to 7.0 and a medium to coarse soil texture.

I range from Virginia south to Florida; west to Texas; north to Oklahoma; west through Arkansas and the Gulf coastal states. In Mississippi, I am report by the NRCS Plants Database only in the southern half of the state.

My red fruit attracts wildlife; I am important food for many songbirds, gamebirds and waterfowl (bluebirds, catbirds, mockingbirds, robins, yellow-shafted flickers, red-naped sapsuckers, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, whitethroated sparrows, cedar waxwings, Florida ducks, black ducks, mourning doves, ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail and wild turkey). My fruit is eaten by armadillo, black bear, gray fox, western fox, raccoon and skunks. My foliage and twigs browsed by white-

I have no commercial value in the timber industry.

foliage provides wildlife cov-

er during the winter months.

tailed deer. My evergreen

I am one of the most durable and adaptable of the small-leaved evergreen for use in southern landscapes. I grow well throughout my range in sidewalk cutouts and other sites with limited exposed soil. I am protected by Florida statute.

I am used by Native American tribes in the SE United States for medicinal and multiple other purpose. My leaves and shoots are used to make a decoction called "black drink", utilized medicinally and ceremonially and also served as a social drink. There is some evidence that the southeastern tribes traded me with nearby neighbors and they transplanted and cared for me.

I am the only native plant in North America that contains caffeine.

Who Am I?

Tree Knowledge - Who Am I? for February 2012 was the Common Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis L.) Check out page 167 in the Mississippi Trees book.



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Safety First ...

ATV SAFETY

All Terrain Vehicles, or ATVs, are popular machines used for work and play. Originally built in Japan for use in isolated, mountainous regions, ATVs are widely used today for everyday chores on farms and ranches. ATVs are also purchased for recreation. People enjoy the thrill of riding up and down hills and jumping over ditches.

Like other activities involving high speeds and heavy machinery, riding an ATV can be risky. To help stay safe, follow common sense safety tips. Take knowledge to the extreme and learn more about these important tips for safer riding.

- ◆ Take a hands-on safety training course. Formal training teachers drives how to control ATVs in typical situations. Drives with formal, hands-on ATV training have a lower injury risk than drives with no formal training.
- Always wear protective gear especially

a helmet. Many ATV injuries are head injuries. Wearing a helmet may reduce the severity of these injuries. Select a motorcycle or other motorized sports helmet and make sure the helmet is certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and/or the Snell Memorial Foundation. In addition, wear over-the-ankle boots, goggles, gloves, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt to protect against cuts, abrasions, and other injuries from rocks, trees, and other debris.

Do not drive ATVs with a passenger or ride as a passenger. The majority of ATVs are designed to carry only one person. ATVs are designed for interactive riding drivers must be able to shift their weight freely in all directions, depending on the situation and terrain. Interactive riding is critical to maintaining safe control of an ATV especially on vargers can make it difficult for drivers to control the ATV.

 Do not drive ATVs on paved roads.
 ATVs – because of

how they're made – are difficult to control on paved roads. Collisions with cars and other vehicles also can be deadly. Many fatalities involving ATVs occur on paved roads.

Do not permit children to drive or ride a adult ATVs. Children are involved in about one-third of all ATV-related deaths and hospital emergency room injuries. Most of these deaths and injuries occur when a child is driving or riding on an adult ATV. Children under 16 on adult ATVs are twice as likely to be injured as those riding youth **ATVs**

Do not drive ATVs while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol and drugs impair reaction time and judgment, two essential

skills for safe ATV use.

In 2002, ATV crashes resulted in 357 fatalities and 113,900 injured riders. The number of fatalities was up by 67 percent from 1997. The number of injured riders more than doubled in the same time period.

A preliminary review of news reports shows at least 11 deaths from 2/14/2012 to 2/27/2012. of these 1 was a youth under 16.

Mississippi ATV Deaths

260

105

Total Reported 322 Deaths (1982 -2010) *

Reported Deaths (1982 -2006)

Reported 62 Deaths (2007 - 2010)*

Reported
Deaths (1982 - 2006) For Children under 16

* Data collection for 2007-2010 is ongoing.



First Time, Every Time

ving terrain, Passen-